

Masthead Logo

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# Cicadas

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## John Repp

### CICADAS

Cicadas in the hot trees rasp  
zydeco, clack exoskeletal  
flamenco, exhibitionist  
rumba, Antonio clapping  
hands over his ears. And me?  
My God. Thirteen years since Point Breeze.  
Missed the first garbage day. Maggots  
on wet tar the next. Chris culled

agony from the hive. I chewed  
what combs she wedged in my cheeks. She  
jammed me in. *Oh honey* we droned.  
Bet on it: Expect cattle,  
find buffalo; pack a picnic,  
hear the pilot fuck The Screamer,  
floorboards rumbling Billy Joel.  
I find open-casket viewings

barbaric, but, like you, I gape  
at a goat skull wedged in creased  
dust under the olive, zygote  
curled hazy on the monitor,  
a mother and gate-mouthed toddler  
dead the next minute—women keen,  
mobs storm relief trucks, beautiful  
as is, suchness, *samsara* is

*nirvana*. I whooped in the jeep  
Klaus careened to the beach—discos,  
*hambergeur* joints, *tourismos*, then  
a battalion of bare tits, yes,  
breasts and the women they graced, ah,

sashay of hue and posture  
buffing me, Herr Bumpkin Ogle—  
forty-three, fifteen, no matter—  
and when the day's best beauty spread  
oil armpit to belly, oh wind,  
oh blue, ought-to-be-bottled  
Mediterranean wind, wit  
jumped ship, ideas rotted, the beams  
of my inner cathedral bowed  
under the light's weight. Sexual  
healing, Marvin Gaye called it. *Aye!*

shouts Bluebeard in the overgrown  
notebooks of my fifteenth summer,  
rutting in the Sea Islands,  
butchering Choctaw, once lulling  
a harem naked with nothing  
more than a few strummed chords.  
Three decades later I can stroke  
the silk they unwrapped from their hips.

Narcissus goes hard to jowl,  
bristle, *character*, raw millet  
cast on cold cereal, and still  
loves the ghost of delight as much  
as delight itself—so be it,  
straddle the goddamned Rubicon,  
bliss unwrapped under the *bodhi*  
perhaps six pill bugs curled on tile,

vertigo on the Murcia bus,  
scorpion flung from a sandal,  
bread a large hand spreads with peach jam,  
insects half the size of my fist

working their legs as they die.